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ABSTRACT

Based on the premise that the most important activity of socialization is the construction of meaning systems in a person's mind, this paper describes a study of U.S. children and adolescents who reside in Japan and Japanese children and adolescents who reside in the United States. The study attempted to isolate specific developmental processes that indicated how and when culture-specific meaning systems became incorporated in a person's self-concept. Findings indicated that the greatest differences between Japanese and U.S. children are those pertaining to the norms of interpersonal behavior, but children between the ages of 9 and 15 from both cultures appear to acquire culture-specific meaning systems based on the age of entry into a country and the length of their stay. Once acquired, cultural grammar constitutes the core of cultural identity and appears to affect interaction with peers and adults. During adolescence, young people consciously reexamine and redefine these cultural effects. A nine-item bibliography is included. (JHP)

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The Acquisition of Cultural Identity among Children Growing up in a Multicultural Setting

- With a special reference to cultural grammar for dealing with peers and adults -

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There are two approaches in developmental psychology: one approach assumes universals concerning psychological functions; the other assumes that developmental processes are historically and culturally specific phenomena. My research has been with the latter. I have been particularly interested in the incorporation of meaning systems. This of course contrasts with much of developmental psychology which has not been very concerned with this.

The most important activity of socialization is the construction of meaning systems in the individual's mind. These meaning systems constitute the content of the self. In this sense, the content of self-concept reflects the social processes with which the individuals are involved. Studies I have undertaken in America, Japan and in an international community over the past ten years have focused upon how the children become committed to their world of meanings as abstracted for themselves from participation in interaction with people in their environment. What I have found is that there is a sensitive period for this incorporation of the meaning system, and that this governs interpersonal behavior, especially when dealing with peers and adults.

METHODOLOGY

My research has two characteristics. The first is attention to intercultural experience. Most socialization studies have focused upon learning to be a member of the particular society in which the individual is born and lives continually. Under such settings researchers have been unable to fully discover the process and chronology by which a child formulates a personal world of meanings. Incorporation of a meaning system is a very important aspect of socialization, but it has not been sufficiently noticed. Unlike acquisition of behavior patterns, the incorporation of cultural meaning is not clearly manifested as long as children grow up in a society in which they are born. Therefore, this aspect of socialization has remained unexamined.

The experiences of children growing up temporarily in cultures other than their own offer, then, an invaluable opportunity for isolating the developmental processes of how and when culture-specific meaning systems are incorporated into a child's self concept. What it means to be brought up in Japan, for example, becomes clear in the light of a Japanese child's American experience. The transfer of residence from one culture to another lays open the process in bold relief for close examination, and thus it can serve as a critical situation in which the researcher can assess cultural identity.

One of subjects of my study has been Japanese children living in the United States. Another subject has been foreign children living temporarily or permanently in Japan as a consequence of their fathers' job. In this setting exposure to the American systems of meaning surely makes a Japanese child aware of his Japanese semiotic world or vice versa. The setting is strategically useful for studying how individuals selectively construct cultural meanings for their behavior in a new setting.

The first part of my study was made by taking advantage of a naturally-occuring quasi-experimental design. Socialization in Japan was conceived as "experimental condition Ⅰ" and socialization in the United States as "condition Ⅱ." The subjects had undergone both conditions for variable lengths of time at different ages. This enabled me to assess when and to what extent meaning systems particular to each condition are incorporated into a child's self concept. The second part of my study has consisted of case studies of high school students attending an international school in Japan. Data have been collected, focusing upon how a child feels about and operates at the interface of two or more cultures.

During my studies I have considered the conceptual distinction of cognition, behavior and affect to be critical. This is the second char-

acteristic of my study. Any human behavior in a cultural context always contains affective, cognitive and behavioral components. So far, most psychological theories have been built mainly on one aspect of human behavior, disregarding its relations to other aspects or implicitly assuming that findings in the sphere of behavior or cognition are sufficient to understand human behavior. Through my studies of the intercultrual expereince of Japanese families residing in Los Angeles, I have realized the problems inherent in theory-building which makes no conceptual distinctions between affect, cognition and behavior. In the prime time of behaviorism, psychologists focused almost exclusively upon observable behavior. During the rise of cognitivism in the 1960's, many psychological phenomena tended to be explained in terms of "cognition." In the postpositivist era of the 1980's some psychologists have recommended that we pay more attention to affect than cognition (Zajonce 1984). My data lead me to believe that theory-building based on either behavior, cognition or affect is inappropriate, and that discrepancies among the three are an essential feature of intercultural experience. In fact, affect, cognition and behavior work relatively independently and are not dominated by the same principles. This is a new conceptualization which I offer to explain human behavior at the interface of cultures.

For example, a Japanese man can immitate the American way of treating his wife courteously, but with a reluctant feeling which his American counterpart may not experience. This type of incongruence between affect and behavior is seldom noticed when psychologists study subjects in their own culture. One's affect is very much determined by meaning systems specific to a culture which one has been attached to. It is important to direct our attention to the mutual relationships among behavior, cognition and affect, without focusing exclusively upon either cognition or behavior.

A word may be needed here about the functions of meaning systems.

According to the anthropologist, meanings represent the world, create cultural entities, direct one to do certain things, and evoke certain feelings (D'Andrade, 1984). The representational and constructive functions of meaning systems are referred to as "cognition"in my theory, while the directive function is referred to as "behavior". Affect is related to the evocative function of meaning systems. The title of my talk on the program said "cultural scripts", but I would like to change it to "cultural grammar," since cultural meaning systems prescribe for us not only cognitive scripts for behavior, but also affective patterns. The concept of "script" seems to only refer to ways of mental representations which connote "cognition".

My approach is quite different from that usually adopted by tough-minded experimental psychologists. In the first stage I observed and interviewed my subjects either at home or in school, in order to find out appropriate questions to be asked for a more quantitatively oriented second stage of the study. It was this first stage that made me aware of the fact that, when exposed to a culture other than own, one's affect, cognition or behavior do not work in an integrated manner. This enabled me to pay more attention to discrepancies among the three, when I analyze data. This distinction became a major feature of my study.

MEANING SYSTEMS IN THE INTERPERSONAL SPHERE: THE UNITED STATES VERSUS JAPAN

Each society has a different semiotic system, which serves as a "grammar" for interpersonal behavior. What follows is an explication of differences between Japanese and American cultural grammar. The word "American" and "Japanese" refere to the ideal types in the Weberian sense of the middle class white American and the middel class Japanese, respectively.

For Americans, "the Self" is the central point of reference. Regarding this principle, Hsu (1971: 443) states that in America

individuals are encouraged to value the status of making their own decisions and being their own master. In the American conception the person, as a basic unit of actions, has a self or ego with a definite boundary, in which the function of decision-making is considered to be located.

To the Japanese, "the Other" is the point of reference employed to define one's position in the world. This is the basis for the Japanese cultural grammar of interpersonal relationships. A key concept used by the Japanese for understanding or relating to "the Other" is omoiyari, empathy in English. "Omoiyari refers to the ability and willingness to feel what others are feeling,... and to help them satisfy their wishes ...Lebra(1976:38)." This interdependence between "the Self" and "the Other" is also reflected in communicative modes. For example, in the States, it is the sender's responsibility to compose a clear message, while in Japan "if a communication fails, the reciever, not the sender, is apt to be accused of lack of comprehension (Nagashima 1973:96)."

Kean, Japanologist of Columbia University, who lives each year in New York from January to June and in Japan for the rest of the year, once wrote in Japanese in the following manner:

> "Most of the time I am now able to understand what was not said, and to infer correctly what he really wants to say in case of an ambiguous reply. When in Japan, I am obliged to pay constant attention to "signals" in order to understand what he really wants to say. However, this is psychologically really taxing. If I could converse with Japanese without guessing behind the words as if I talked with my friends in New York, I would be very much relaxed (Kean 1987:9)."

In the Western conception, self is an entity packaged entirely with in the individual, while the Japanese conception of self, jibun, is something which is found between "the Other" and "Ji". Doi was the first who

attempted to explicate this unique constellation of "the Other" and "the Self" among Japanese. He could not find an equivalent English word to describe it and used the Japanese word amae as a key concept for understanding Japanese personality structure (Doi, 1962). The twofold structure of Japanese consciousness, that is, tatemae (an external face which is shown to others) and honne (the true feelings that are generally concealed), is deeply related to the concept of amae. A speaker depends upon his partner's sensitivity to understand his honne behind tatemae. Japanese interdependence does not grow out of childhood dependence; it should be understood in the context of the world of meanings in which Japanese live.

It is now evident that the Japanese cultural ethos within which a principle of interdependence has emerged is quite different from self-contained individualism in America. The question is which cultural grammar Japanese children will incorporate if they are raised in American community by Japanese parents, attending a local American school. This is related to finding out a clue about when cultural meaning systems in general are incorporated into the individual.

FINDINGS

1) Discrepancies experienced by a child who crosses a cultural boundary were examined mainly in terms of meaning systems related to the interpersonal sphere. This is because the greatest differences between Japan and the United States are probably those pertaining to the norms and patterns of interpersonal behavior. Therefore, changes, that may occur among Japanese who are exposed to the American pattern, are predicted to be the most dramatic. It is strategically better to select such an arena as a dependent variable. Thus acquisition of American patterns by Japanese children became a focus of my study.

The degree of the child's acquisition of an American pattern, the dependent measure, is assessed in terms of felt discrepancies among

affective, behavioral and cognitive levels (Table 1).

Type I refers to those who do not have a clear perception of differences between American and Japanese interpersonal behavior, and whose way of thinking, feeling, and behaving are very Japanese despite their living in the United states.

Type II refers to those who have an articulate perception of differences between the American and Japanese cultural patterns, but whose ways of thinking, feeling or behaving show almost no indications of acculturation toward American patterns. They have a knowledge of how to behave overtly in America, but do not do so. All fifteen children of this type have lived in the States less than three years. Those younger than age ten tended to describe differences between American and Japanese friends in terms of physical characteristics or activities they engaged in, while children older than eleven tended to comment on differences in interpersonal behavior. Prolonged stay may differenciate them into either Type III or TypeV.

Type III refers to those who have two sets of cognitive scripts for behavior, one, Japanese, and the other, American, and use one at a time, depending on a demand of a situation. They appear to preserve the Japanese cultural grammar, which is simply dormant while they are in the United States. At the behavioral and the cognitive level, they are bicultural, but at the affective level they are more Japanese. They all came to America after age nine.

Type IV refers to those who adopted the American grammar for behavior but whose grammar for interpersonal relationships is not apparent. Like Type III they are American both at the cognitive and at the behavioral level, but data fails to indicate the degree of acculturation at the affective level.

Type V refers to those who tend to believe the American ways are the only way. Children at this level are American at all three levels.

They tended to say "I don't remember much about Japan." or "I don't want to live in Japan, since I don't know what it looks like." Some said, "I guess what Mom told me about Japan is probably true, because she is Japanese," implying they were not Japanese. They all came to the United States before the age of nine (see Minoura 1979 for more concrete description of each type).

The level of acculturation of 72 subjects are rated on the basis of interview material. Distribution of children among the five levels varied significantly across the age of entry at the .01 level(x^2=44.3 df=12 p<.01), as well as across length of stay at the .01 level (x^2= 29.4 df=4 p<.001). These indicated that those who came to the United States before age nine or those who have resided there for more than four years tended to incorporate the American meaning system more.

Regression analysis revealed that the age of entry and the length of stay accounted for 60 % of the known variation in the degree of the acquisition of the American pattern, indicating that children acquires a culture-specific system of meanings within the limits set by their sequence of development. Age-related factors are more or less related to the readiness of the individual. The language and the socialization environment are channels through which the contents of a culture reach the individual. In sum, maturational readiness is the primary determinant, and the amount of interaction is as important in the incorporation of cultural meanings (Fig. 1).

2) Children acquire a culture-specific system of meanings related to interpersonal skills during a period between the age of nine and fifteen. During this period the pattern of behavior develop deep roots on the symbolic level, while shaping the affective domain related to it. Here the prototype of "an American" or "a Japanese",in a cultural sense, is shaped. Children who have crossed a cultural boundary after this sensitive period were basically operating with the semiotics to which

they had been initially inducted during that period, although they may have become able to behave in accordance with the host society's norms.

Table 1 appears to indicate that during a period between nine and thirteen children acquire a culture-specific system of meanings related to interpersonal behavior. The problem was that I could not find a sufficient number of informants who were taken to the States after age 13 to draw a valid statement about the upper limit of the sensitive period. Therefore, the upper limit was explored by examining cases who had raised in the States and returned to Japan after age 13. These cases indicated that children of age 14 or 15 were flexible enough to switch to the Japanese meaning system, though they experienced considerable strain in doing so.

3) Once acquired, cultural grammar constitutes the core of cultural identity and comes to have motivational significance for behavior. The meaning systems acquired during the sensitive period function as a dominant psycho-behavioral system which regulates one's daily interaction with peers and adults.

4) What has been taken into one's self concept during this sensitive period is reexamined during adolescence, if they live in a foreign culture continually. Cultural elements which were not incorporated into one's psycho-behavioral system tend to enter into one's conciousness during adolescence. In the case of a Japanese child who has incorporated the American pattern as his psycho-behavioral system as a result of being raised in the States,his affiliation with Japan through his citizenship or parental cultural background tends to loom large at this period in many cases and to become a salient element of his self-concept. For adolescents with bicultural parentage who have internalized the Japanese meaning system, it will be the culture of a non-Japanese parent(Minoura 1987).

Unlike the cultural system inculcated during the sensitive period,

this is a conscious part of one's self-definition. The former may be called "the instrumental culture", while the latter is "the symbolic culture". For those who are born and live continually in the same cultural milieu, the symbolic culture is congruent with the instrumental one; thus no conflicts arise. This is why reorganization processes of self-definition during adolescence has been overlooked by researchers.

These are what I have found so far. After ten years' research on socialization processes at the interface of cultures, I am convinced that the conceptual distinction of cognition, behavior and affect is very crucial to understand human behavior in a cultural context.

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TABLE 1

Distribution of Children Among the Five Types of Acculturation by Age of Entry and Length of Stay

Age of Entry	Younger than 9 yrs. old	9 & 10 ys. old	11,12 & 13 ys. old	older than 13 ys. old	more 4 ys	less 4ys	Total
Type I	3	4	2	1	3	7	10
Type II	4	5	4	2		15	15
Type III		2	6	1	5	4	9
Type IV	19	4			11	12	23
Type V	13				13		13
undecided	1	1			1	1	2
Total	40	16	12	4	33	39	72

FIGURE 1

Regression Model for Variables Which Affect Japanese Children's Acculturation toward the American Pattern. (with the Proportions Accounted for (R^2)